

Amendments to the Drawings:

The drawing sheets attached in connection with the above-identified application containing Figures 1-8 are being presented as new formal drawing sheets to be substituted for the previously submitted drawing sheets. The drawing Figures 1-8 have been amended. Appended to this amendment are annotated copies of the previous drawing sheets which have been marked to show changes presented in the replacement sheets of the drawings.

The specific changes which have been made to Figures 1-8 are shown in the attached sheets that are annotated to show the changes made to Figures 1-8.

New Figure 9 has been added on a new formal drawing sheet in addition to the replacement sheets containing Figures 1-8.



REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

In the specification, paragraphs 0019, 0035, 0048, 0049, 0055, and 0064 have been amended. A new paragraph has been added after paragraph 0063.

Claim 2 has been cancelled.

New claims 21-24 have been added.

This amendment adds, changes and/or deletes claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 1 and 3-24 are now pending in this application.

Objections to the Drawings

The drawings are objected to for containing informalities. The drawings have been amended to overcome the objections.

In regard to the drawing objection regarding the features of claims 6 and 7, Applicant submits that the drawings show the features of claim 6. For example, Figure 5 shows the features of claim 6. New Figure 9 has been added to show the features of claim 7.

Withdrawal of the objections is respectfully requested.

Objections to the Specification

The specification is objected to for containing informalities. The specification has been amended to overcome these objections.

In regard to the objection to paragraph 0054, line 4, of the specification, the Office stated that portions between holes are not projectiles. However, paragraph 0054 does not discuss portions between holes that “project” or are “projectiles.” Therefore, paragraph 0054 has not been amended. Withdrawal of the objections is respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 5, 8-18, and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The claims have been amended to overcome these rejections. Withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 3, 8, and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Number Re.36898 (hereafter “Sawada et al.”). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Amended claim 1 recites an airbag cover a groove comprising holes extending discontinuously within a range of a thickness of the airbag cover; and a portion reduced in thickness which is thinned in a direction of the thickness at an end area of the groove, and which extends from the end area of the groove in a direction along an extension of the groove, and is formed with an extended portion in which a depth of thinning in the direction of the thickness varies gradually; wherein the airbag cover is adapted to be torn along the groove when the vehicle's airbag is inflated and deployed; wherein the depth of thinning of the extended portion is reduced gradually as the extended portion extends away from the end of the groove along an extension of the groove.

Sawada et al. discloses an airbag cover 1 with predetermined zones of weakness 1C. See Sawada et al. at col. 2, lines 57-60. The Office contends that Figure 2 of Sawada et al. shows beveled areas in the corners of cover 1. See Office Action at page 6. However, such beveled areas have a thickness that varies in a direction that is perpendicular to the direction of a tear line groove, or along the zones of weakness, not in a direction that “extends away from the end of the groove along an extension of the groove.” Therefore, Sawada et al. fails

to disclose all of the features of claim 1. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Pub. No. 2004/0207181 (hereafter "Hayashi et al."). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Attached to this response is a translation of the priority application in the present case, i.e., Japanese Patent Application No. 2003-187667, which was filed in the Japanese Patent Office on June 30, 2003. Applicants submit this translation to overcome the rejection based on Hayashi et al. based on its § 102(e) date of February 3, 2004. See 37 C.F.R. § 1.55. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sawada et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,467,801 (hereafter "Preisler et al."). This rejection is respectfully traversed. Preisler et al. fails to remedy the deficiencies of Sawada et al. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the indication that claims 4-7, 11-18, and 20 contain allowable subject matter. Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

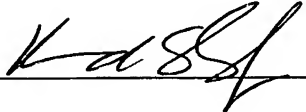
The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to

charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

Date 10/6/2006

By 

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